

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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TAGS: PROP, SOPN CH
SUBJ: PEOPLE'S DAILY HITS BACK AT "CHINA EXPERTS"

REF: PEKING 495

1. PEOPLE'S DAILY FEB 27 CARRIED AN ATTACK ON
SO-CALLED "CHINA EXPERTS" WHO WRITE ARTICLES DEFAMING THE PRC.
THE ARTICLE, AUTHORED BY SSU-MA TA, TAKES ON "WESTERN POLI-
TICIANS, SCHOLARS AND JOURNALISTS" OF THE 1970'S WHO, PRE-
TENDING TO BE EXPERTS, RIDICULE VISITORS TO CHINA WHO WRITE
REPORTS PRAISING THE PRC. THESE "EXPERTS", CLAIMING THAT
"MANY CREDULOUS VISITORS ARE SEARCHING FOR A UTOPIA
AND SEE EVERYTHING THROUGH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES,"
SEEM TO FEEL IT IS THEIR DUTY TO PROVIDE AN ANTIDOTE, TO
DISSOLVE THE "MYTH" OF CHINA.

2. FROM THE QUOTES OFFERED BY THE ARTICLE, IT IS CLEAR
THAT TWO OF ITS TARGETS ARE RECENTLY EXPELLED TORONTO GLOBE
AND MAIL CORRESPONDENT ROSS MUNRO AND BELGIAN AUTHOR SIMON
LEYS. THUS THE ARTICLE CITES STATEMENTS WHICH MAKE FUN
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OF THE FACT THAT "ALL CHINESE BELONG TO A UNIT" (MUNRO)
AND COMPLAINTS THAT FOREIGN VISITORS MEET ONLY ABOUT SIXTY
CHINESE DURING THEIR ENTIRE VISIT (LEYS). OTHER QUOTES
CLAIM THAT THE ANTI-GANG OF FOUR CAMPAIGN HAS LED TO DIS-
ORDER; THAT CHINESE ARE LIKE "THE HANDS OF A CLOCK THAT
DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO TURN"; AND THAT ONE CAN TELL FROM
CLOTHING DIFFERENCES THAT "CHINESE SOCIAL EQUALITY IS A SHAM."

3. THE AUTHOR RETORTS THAT CHINA HAS NEVER CLAIMED TO BE A UTOPIA WHICH HAS SOLVED ALL HUMAN PROBLEMS, AND THAT IT WELCOMES FOREIGN VISITORS WHO OFFER CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM. IN THE PRC, HE SAYS, ARE BOTH FLOWERS AND THORNS, BUT THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME. "IT IS THE GUARDIANS OF CAPITALISM IN THE OLD DAYS, TO WHOM THE EXISTENCE OF THE 'FREE WORLD' OF POOR MAN'S CAVE DWELLINGS, OF MASSES OF UNEMPLOYED OF A CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD AND PROSTITUTION WAS HEAVEN ON EARTH, WHO REALLY MAKE YOU VOMIT." THE "CHINA EXPERTS" WHO LIVE IN A WORLD FILLED WITH "SOCIAL CRISES, MORAL CRISES, CRISES OF VALUE AND CRISES OF CONFIDENCE" SHOULD NOT SEEK FAULT WITH CHINA.

4. THE ARTICLE IS PRESUMABLY A RESPONSE TO THE MORE CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD CHINA ON THE PART OF MANY WESTERNERS WHICH SUCCEEDED TO THE INITIAL EUPHORIA SURROUNDING CHINA'S "OPENING" TO THE WEST IN THE EARLY 1970'S. LIKE AN EARLIER PAIR OF ARTICLES ON THE CHINESE SYSTEM OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE (REFTEL), IT DISPLAYS AN INCREASING SENSITIVITY TOWARD WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION. THIS IN TURN MAY INDICATE MORE WILLINGNESS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE PRC'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE WEST.
WOODCOCK

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